



Speech By  
**Andrew Powell**

**MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE**


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**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL**

**APPROPRIATION BILL**

**REVENUE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (11.16 am): I rise to address the 2022-23 state budget. To be blunt, I was tempted to dust off and recycle previous speeches I have given on Labor government budgets because, yet again, we have a budget of broken promises and missed opportunities. Let me start on those broken promises. Prior to this week, Queenslanders had already lost faith in the Palaszczuk Labor government. We have had the Jackie Trad saga. We had further revelations about that this morning—or a lack of revelations. We have had the raid on the Integrity Commissioner, the treatment of the State Archivist, Labor lobbyists, red carpets and a Premier who has checked out.

The actions of the Treasurer this week further demonstrate that this government cannot be trusted. Some 26 times before the last election the government said that there would be no new or increased taxes. What do we see? We see three new taxes. What we were told by the Treasurer was: 'But did you notice that I never once mentioned business.' That is just tricky. Queenslanders have lost faith and they cannot trust this Palaszczuk Labor government anymore.

It is also a budget of missed opportunities. I heard the Premier say that budgets are about ensuring governments look after Queenslanders. Let us unpack whether they have achieved that. I want to focus on how this budget does or does not do that, how it delivers for Queenslanders and how it delivers for the Glass House electorate in four key areas—health, housing, education and roads and public transport.

Let us start with health. Every member in this House has heard the hospital horror stories and the ramping horror stories—constituents waiting dangerously long times for surgery or dental services. The Premier, the Treasurer and the health minister want us to think that this budget will address the health crisis. In terms of the centrepiece—the big announcement around three new hospitals at Coomera, Toowoomba and Bundaberg—what they do not want people to know is that there will be two more elections and more than five years before Queenslanders will see one bed open in those hospitals.

Take the northern part of the Gold Coast, for example. The AMAQ, the pre-eminent professional association of doctors in this state, suggest that the region is short 500 hospital beds today—not in five years but today. In five years what will the new Coomera Hospital deliver? It will deliver 400 beds. Five hundred beds are needed now versus 400 beds delivered in five years. That just does not add up. That still leaves us far behind what we need. It does nothing to address the health crisis.

The Premier in question time yesterday challenged us to listen to what our communities are saying about this record health budget. Premier, let me read just one comment from one of my constituents who took the time to share this with me. They state—

Andrew, six years for the Labor government to fix the hospital system. What have they been doing for the last six years? Tell them, when John F Kennedy made his speech that the USA would put a man on the moon and bring him back again, it only took eight years from start to finish to achieve a moon landing and return. Yet Queenslanders cannot get half decent medical care for another six years! By then population growth will completely outstrip their budget and it will be as bad as it is now. Long delivery times from this government means just another bandaid.

The Premier wants us to listen to our communities. How about the Premier start listening to Queenslanders, start listening to the communities herself? The Premier, the Treasurer, the health minister and all Labor MPs walk around with their glossy health plans and brochures. They even do rather odd social media videos. To be blunt, Queenslanders can see right through them. This is no health fix. Ramping will get worse. Surgery waiting lists will continue to grow. It is not about record health budgets; it is about Labor's record on health.

I do want to spend a bit of time acknowledging a positive note in this budget. Every Queenslander knows someone experiencing mental illness. For many of us it is a loved one. Nothing causes you more anguish. Nothing causes you more frustration—frustration that it takes three to six months to see a psychologist from the time of referral; frustration that the existing community and not-for-profit services are so overwhelmed they can rarely take on new clients; frustration that a young person with suicidal ideation cannot be seen by the state mental health team because they are not serious enough, that the young person actually needs to attempt suicide before they will be seen; frustration that even then services are stretched too thin.

I do welcome the additional funding of \$1.64 billion in operating funds and \$28.5 million in capital funds for mental health. That money will go to new beds for adolescents, young adults, adults, people with perinatal disorders or eating disorders, and older persons requiring mental health services. There will be new beds for crisis response services. There will be more than 1,000 new staff and there will be improved delivery of psychological supports for non-government providers. This cannot happen soon enough.

I am appalled, despite rivers of revenue including a windfall of \$5 billion in coal royalties, that the government has decided this increased funding requires a new levy on our businesses. Again, it is naive on their part to believe that a tax on Woolies and Coles is not going to be passed on through the cost of groceries. While they might be fixing one crisis in mental health, they are adding to another. We are already in the throes of a full-blown cost-of-living crisis. This is just going to exacerbate that crisis—which brings me to housing.

I am sorry, Glass House, but there is nothing that I can see in this budget that will address housing affordability, our local rental crisis or homelessness any time soon. There is no new social housing in the electorate. In fact, I just received a response to a question on notice that shows in a town such as Maleny there has not been a new social housing unit built by a Labor government since 2004. There is no new crisis or emergency housing. In fact, the entire Sunshine Coast Regional Council is only going to get 137 new social housing units over the next five years.

There is no plan to open up more land other than Caboolture West, which was opening up anyway. There is no plan to review restrictive planning laws. There is no plan to consider innovative solutions like tiny homes. There is nothing. Like health, I fear our housing affordability crisis in the Moreton Bay and Sunshine Coast hinterland will get much worse before it will get better.

When it comes to education there was an announcement for the electorate. There will be a new school built in that growing region of Caboolture West, but you do not need to be a rocket scientist to realise that, with a city the size of Gladstone progressively being built out at Caboolture West, we will need to build at least five government schools, so that announcement is very much business as usual.

Of more interest to me and impact on the electorate of Glass House, the education minister has explained to me that she has tasked her department to look at something called 'school optimisation'. That is where we use existing schools, particularly those with capacity, rather than racing off to build new schools. As I explained to the minister, we have several classic examples, but it may require some out-of-the-box thinking.

Take the beautiful Mount Mee State School, for example. It is a beautiful school. It has wonderful teachers and staff. It has plenty of space in a truly spectacular setting. All it would take to increase student numbers is greater flexibility in school transport. Currently kids at Ocean View are bussed off the D'Aguilar Range to Dayboro, and Dayboro is a school that is bursting at the seams. Instead of building more buildings at Dayboro, by changing a bus service we could increase the student numbers

at Mount Mee. By offering a bus service from Ocean View to Mount Mee, we could kill two birds with one stone. We could relieve pressure on Dayboro, reduce costs and increase student numbers at Mount Mee.

Then there is the Woodford P-10. Currently, after year 10, students are sent to Kilcoy or Tullawong state high schools for years 11 and 12. Both now I understand—and perhaps the member for Nanango can confirm for me—are enrolment capped.

**Mrs Frecklington:** Correct.

**Mr POWELL:** Let's not build a new school. Let's just take Woodford to a P-12 school. The minister herself said she is not a big fan of P-10s, and neither am I. Let's make it a P-12. Let's make it a true state college. These sorts of solutions are sensible, they are responsible and, at the end of the day, they also build community.

Finally, let's talk about roads and rail. There is no question that there is a lot happening in Glass House. I have spoken previously about some of the significant works occurring at the moment. On the D'Aguilar Highway between Caboolture and Wamuran we have a widening and safety improvement program. On Steve Irwin Way at Beerburrum we have works starting to occur to allow for the duplication of the north coast rail line. On Steve Irwin Way between Beerwah and Landsborough we also have widening and safety improvements including traffic lights going in at the intersection at Australia Zoo.

On the Bruce Highway between Caboolture and Elimbah we have six-laning. Starting this year we have the rail duplication itself between Beerburrum and Beerwah. But do not be fooled. All of this is only happening because of funding—in some cases significant funding beyond what they are required to contribute—from the then federal Morrison government, even on wholly state controlled roads like the D'Aguilar Highway and Steve Irwin Way. So it will come as no surprise that there is no new funding for road projects in Glass House from this Palaszczuk Labor government. Clearly, their one source of funding—the federal Morrison government—is now no longer there, and they have no solutions themselves.

There is nothing for Mount Mee Road at Ocean View or at Delaneys Creek or for lights on the D'Aguilar Highway at Campbells Pocket Road at Wamuran or at Mount Mee Road at D'Aguilar. There is no money for an intersection upgrade on Landsborough Maleny Road and Maleny Montville Road, where unfortunately there was another significant accident just last week. There is no money for Maleny Kenilworth Road at Witta. The money for the upgrade of Maleny Kenilworth Road at Cambroon is fortunately still there, but sadly I cannot tell residents when that will actually start. I simply do not know. I am simply not told.

Unbelievably, there is nothing for the heavy rail from Beerwah to Caloundra to Kawana to Maroochydore, despite the Morrison federal government putting \$1.6 billion—that is 50 per cent of the funding for that critical project—on the table. If they will not build it, we will. That is our commitment to the people of the Sunshine Coast. I thank the Leader of the Opposition, David Crisafulli, the member for Broadwater, for that commitment. I know that that is needed not only now but when we become a host of the 2032 Olympics. That infrastructure is vital.

Queenslanders have lost faith in the Palaszczuk Labor government. The Palaszczuk Labor government has stopped listening to Queenslanders. Yes, there are lots of words, there are lots of big numbers, there are lots of glossy brochures and awkward social media videos, but the details disappoint. The details are so disappointing. There is no immediate solution for our health crisis. There is no immediate solution for our housing affordability crisis. There is no solution for the appalling state of our state roads. Queenslanders deserve so much better.